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TITLE: Apparatus and method for satisfying disposable contact lens prescriptions

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## INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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## CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. An integrated system for initial and ongoing supply of prescription disposable contact lenses comprising:

central computer means including plural file storage means said plural means being respectively dedicated to predetermined data files;

means, associated and communicating with said central computer means, for automated processing of prescription orders and prescription changes;

distributed computing means useful by respective prescribing parties for communicating with said means for automated processing; and

manually operable terminal means, associated and communicating with said central computer means, for manual processing of prescription orders and prescription changes;

said central computer means further including means operable on predetermined periodicity, for initiating prescription refills for standing orders, and means for automatically integrating prescription changes with said prescription orders, and prescription refills.

2. A system as described in claim 1 and further comprising means, operable during inventory depletion associated with said integrated prescription orders and refills, for modifying data at select ones of said file storage means, whereby ongoing further orders and changes are directed based on cumulative actual current and directly forecast lens inventories.

3. A system as described in claim 1 wherein said plural file storage means comprise respective means for storing data respecting prescribing parties, means for storing data respecting patients and their lens prescriptions, means for storing data respecting standing refill orders, and means for storing data respecting lens inventories and pricing.

4. A system for provision of disposable contact lenses comprising:

a distributed network of order entry means;

central means, communicating with said network, for receiving and recording prescription orders;

first means for storing a file representing new orders gathered over a predetermined time;

second means for storing a file representing standing orders to be refilled on a periodic basis;

means, operable on a predetermined basis, for integrating said new orders and select ones of said standing orders;

inventory means, responsive to said means for integrating, for filling said new orders and said select standing orders;

wherein said distributed network and said central means include mutual facility to communicate prescription changes and prescription cancellations, said system further including means for automatically amending files stored in both said means for storing, based on communicated orders, changes and cancellations;

further including third means for storing a file of data comprehensively characterizing prescription orders, including data identifying the patient, the prescribing eye care professional, the lens prescription parameters including wear cycles, and select patient history;

wherein said central system includes means, responsive to said third means for storing, for communicating to said eye care professional select data representing patient listing and standing prescription data.

5. A system as described in claim 4 and further including fifth means for storing a file coordinated with said third means for storing, representing lens manufacturing data and batch number traceability of lenses shipped in accordance with prior prescriptions.

6. A system is described in claim 4 wherein said means for integrating comprises means for periodically generating a batch of prescriptions to be filled during the next predetermined period, accurately specifying lenses by parameters, quantities, and location of delivery, irrespective whether the prescription has recently been ordered or changed, and in the case of standing orders, on a timely basis before the last previous prescription has been exhausted in accordance with prescribed wear cycles.

7. A system as described in claim 6 and further including fourth means for storing a file of inventory information, including respective designation of lenses committed to standing orders and lenses not so committed.

8. A system as described in claim 4 and further including means associated with said central means for establishing billing information and for communicating said billing information to select third parties for prescriptions which have been filled.

9. A system as described in claim 8 wherein said means for establishing and communicating includes sixth means for storing a file of lens pricing data, and means operably associated with said third and said sixth means for conveying billing to a select entity.

10. A system as described in claim 9 wherein said select entity is the patient or the prescribing eye care professional, or a third party reimbursor, or a bank or credit agency previously authorized to pay on behalf of the patient or professional.